

A BRIEF DISCOURSE OF
**REBELLION
& REBELS**

BY GEORGE NORTH

A newly uncovered manuscript
source for **Shakespeare's Plays**

myght, & all other [unclear] of Nature
bountie, except his [unclear] foote: So lyke-
wyse y^e Rebelle, although [unclear] [unclear]
(frontid wth polencie & force, battred wth
numbars & weapon, & had [unclear] [unclear]
vadge & knowledge) at [unclear] sight of [unclear]
sworde, doth ofte for [unclear] all: and other cal-
linge pardon for [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]
(ground, or terming [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]
onlie trust to [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]
Notwthstanding y^e [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]

DENNIS MCCARTHY &
JUNE SCHLUETER

“A BRIEF DISCOURSE OF REBELLION AND REBELS”

BY GEORGE NORTH

"A BRIEF DISCOURSE OF REBELLION AND REBELS" BY GEORGE NORTH

A NEWLY UNCOVERED MANUSCRIPT SOURCE
FOR SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

Dennis McCarthy
June Schlueter



D. S. BREWER in association with the British Library

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their help in publication; grants from these two institutions helped cover the cost of reproducing the facsimile of the manuscript. We also thank Lafayette for providing ready access to EEBO (Early English Books Online) and the British Library for permission to publish “Discourse.”

A Note to the Reader

In order to facilitate digital searches for comparable words and phrases in Shakespeare’s plays, we modernize spelling and punctuation in our transcript of George North’s “Discourse.” In the essays accompanying the transcript and facsimile, we use italics to highlight the connections between North’s work and Shakespeare’s. To achieve emphasis and for ready viewing, we use boldface for identical elements and underlining for analogous elements in the Tables. Throughout the book, quotations from Shakespeare’s plays follow *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, 7th ed., ed. David Bevington (Boston: Pearson, 2014).

1

GEORGE NORTH AND THE KIRTLING HALL MANUSCRIPT

The unpublished manuscript “A Brief Discourse of Rebellion and Rebels,” now housed in the British Library, is a little less than 450 years old.¹ George North wrote the treatise in 1576, signing, dedicating, and presenting it to Roger, 2nd Lord North while living at the nobleman’s Cambridgeshire manor, Kirtling Hall. It generated no known copies or contemporaneous allusions to it. Until now, no Shakespeare scholar has studied the manuscript, and it has probably remained little read. Yet, as our analysis has revealed, “Discourse” is not merely the only uniquely existent, evidently uncopied document to have had a substantial impact on the canon; it is one of the most influential Shakespearean source texts in any form. In one year’s work on the manuscript, we have traced more than twenty Shakespearean monologues and passages back to North’s essay. These include Gloucester’s opening soliloquy about his deformed appearance and villainous determination (*Richard III* 1.1.14–30), Canterbury’s discussion of aristocratic order in the societies of bees (*Henry V* 1.2.183–212), Macbeth’s comparison of various breeds of dogs to different classes of men (*Macbeth* 3.1.93–102), the citizens’ uprising in *Coriolanus* (Act 2), and essentially all the events surrounding Jack Cade’s fatal fight with Alexander Iden in his garden (2 *Henry VI* 4.10). While scholars had long believed that Shakespeare had invented the circumstances

¹ The full title of the treatise is “A brief discourse of rebellion and Rebels, wher’in is showyd, y^e treasur y^t Traytors in y^e execution of theyr treason, by tym attayne to.” It is possible that North’s title was inspired by Thomas Churchyard’s brief poem “A Discourse of Rebellion” (London: William Griffith, 1570).

of Cade's final hours, a reading of Jack Cade's poetic soliloquy in "Discourse" confirms we have now found the source. Similarly, George North's discussion and quoting of a Merlin prophecy also clears up long-standing confusions over the origin and purpose of the Fool's Merlin prophecy in *King Lear* (3.2.79–95). In terms of the number of plays, scenes, and passages affected, the scope of the manuscript's influence likely exceeds all other known Shakespearean sources, excepting only the Chronicles of Hall and Holinshed and Thomas North's *Plutarch's Lives*.

Considering the unusual nature of this discovery, we have taken painstaking steps to assure the uniqueness of the links between "Discourse" and various Shakespearean plays. This includes the use of plagiarism software and rigorous searches of the Early English Books Online–TCP Partnership database (EEBO) to exclude the possibility of other source texts for the shared content and parallel passages. These new methods, discussed in detail in Chapter 2, are akin to literary DNA analyses, both exposing and confirming lineal relationships among texts. We have also included a probability discussion in the Afterword to show why these parallel passages cannot be coincidental. It is possible that these additional analyses will seem superfluous to some, as many of the borrowings and echoes in the parallel passages are so extensive and distinctive, many even referring to the same historical figures in the same context, that Shakespeare's obligation is self-evident. Still, we have included them in an abundance of caution and to overcome even the most unlikely of doubts.

George North was the author of three politically oriented translations: *The Description of Swedland, Gotland, and Finland* (1561), *The Philosopher of the Court* (1575), and *The Stage of Popish Toys* (1581).² North dedicated the first of his

² The Short Title Catalogue entries for North's works are: (1) Münster, Sebastian, 1489–1552. *Cosmographia. Selections. English. The description of Swedland, Gotland, and Finland, the auncient estate of theyr kynges, the moste horrible and incredible tyranny of the second Christiern, kyng of Denmarke, agaynst the Swecians, the poleticke attaynyng to the crowne of Gostave, wyth hys prudent prouidyn for the same. Collected and gathered out of sundry laten aucthors, but chiefly out of Sebastian Mounster. By George North. Set forth accordyng to the order in the Quenes Majesties injunction.* Imprinted at London: By John Awdely, dwelling in litle Britaine Streete, by great S. Bartelmewes, Anno. 1561. The. 28. of October. STC (2nd ed.), 18662; (2) Philibert, de Vienne, active sixteenth century. *Philosophe de court. English. The philosopher of the court, written*

translations to Master Thomas Stukley Esquire, “the right worshipful, and his singular good Master.” This was early in the colorful career of Stukley, who was not only a soldier but a spy, a buccaneer, a mercenary, and, eventually, an enemy to England (he died at the Battle of Alcazar in 1578). By the time of North’s dedication, Stukley had fought for England at the siege of Boulogne and served there as standard bearer, fought for France in the taking of Vercelli, fought for the Duke of Savoy at Saint-Quentin (the Duke served Philip II of Spain as governor of the Netherlands), and joined the troops at Berwick Castle, where he attained a captaincy. In 1551, after winning the favor of Henry II of France, he returned to England and reported on the French King’s alleged plan to siege Calais; unclear whether he was serving the interests of England or France, England confined him in the Tower for several months, after which he retreated to the Emperor’s court in Brussels and then to Saint-Omer. When Queen Mary received him back in England in late 1554 (Stukley was a Roman Catholic), he attended the Duke of Savoy, and in 1560 (under Elizabeth) he briefly served as an agent for Sir Thomas Parry, the Queen’s treasurer and master of the wards. In October 1561, when North’s *Description of Sweden* was published, the English court was entertaining the King of Sweden’s ambassador, who was attempting to arrange a marriage between Eric XIV and Elizabeth, even as Robert Dudley was pursuing her hand. Stukley was involved in the intrigue, apparently at times underhandedly. Clearly, both he and North were interested in the marriage proceedings, but exactly where their lives intersected is unclear. In his dedication, North recalls “my serviceable duty and good will to your

by Philbert of Vienne in Champaigne, and Englished by George North, gentlema[n]. Imprinted at London: By Henry Binnema[n], for Lucas Harison and George Byshop, Anno. 1575. STC (2nd ed.), 19832; (3) Estienne, Henri, 1531–1598. *Apologie pour Hérodote. Selections. English. The stage of popish toys: conteining both tragicall and comicall partes: played by the Romishe roysters of former age; notably describing them by degrees in their colours. Collected out of H. Stephanus in his Apologie upon Herodot. With a friendlie forewarning to our Catelin Catholikes: and a brief admonition, of the sundrie benefites we receive by her Ma: blessed government over us. Compyled by G.N.* [London]: Printed by Henry Binneman, Anno Domini. 1581. STC (2nd ed.), 10552. *Description of Sweden (Cosmographia)* was entered in the Stationers’ Register on 6 November 1559, *The Philosopher* on 15 July 1578, *Popish Toys* on 22 February 1581. All three are available on EEBO, but the edition of *Description of Swedland* is from 1581.

mastership whose large and ample benefits I have not seldom times received with your favorable goodness," and he acknowledges "you and my mistress, whose goodness both I and mine have often times abundantly tasted."³

Later in 1561, in a presentation copy of *Description of Sweden* prepared for the Swedish ambassador, North replaced the dedication to Stukley with one to "that very distinguished and noble gentleman Nils Gyllenstierna" (Guildenstern), who arrived at the English court in March 1561 and departed, without a marriage agreement, in April 1562.⁴ In this special dedication, North explains that, because Eric XIV was a hopeful for the hand of Elizabeth, the people of England were "eager to possess some definite knowledge of the Swedes and Goths and Vandals," so, to satisfy "the urgent desire of these people," he "composed an epitome of their history." The word "composed" is used freely here, for, as North states, *Description of Sweden* is a translation (from Book 4) of Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographia*, with a few passages taken from *Historia de Omnibus Gothorum Sueonumque Regibus*, by Joannes Magnus, [Arch] bishop of Uppsala. He says little of himself in his dedication but appoints Guildenstern his Maecenas "to put the best interpretation on the effort and toil of a man unlettered but well-meaning."⁵

³ Although Stukley the soldier served foreign princes, at the time of the publication of North's *Description of Sweden*, he appears to have been in good favor. The Folger Shakespeare Library holds a copy of *Description of Sweden* once owned by Gabriel Harvey. Among Harvey's marginalia, presumably written soon after he acquired the volume, is this character assessment: "a fine courtier, & brave soldier. A great man with the King of France, the King of Spain, the Emperor, and the Pope, who made him the general of his wars." Indeed, Stukley managed to secure a number of other titles as well. In 1578, he referred to himself as "Thomas Stukley Knight, Baron of Ross and Idron, Viscount of the Morough and Kenslagh, Earl of Wexford and Catherlough, Marquess of Leinster, General of our most holy father Pope Gregory XIII" (Simpson 128). For a biography of Thomas Stukley (the name is variously spelled), see Richard Simpson, ed., *The School of Shakspeare*, 2 vols (London: Chatto and Windus, 1878), 1:1–156. The study includes the play *The Famous History of the Life and Death of Captain Thomas Stukeley* (1605), 157–268.

⁴ A translation of the dedication to Guildenstern, which was originally in Latin, may be found in *The Description of Swedland, Gotland, and Finland* by George North, with an introduction by Marshall W. S. Swan (New York: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1946). Stockholm's Kungliga Biblioteket holds the volume containing this dedication.

⁵ *Description of Sweden*, ed. Swan, xxix, xxx, xxx.

North's two subsequent translations are dedicated to Christopher Hatton, who, by 1575, the date of *The Philosopher*, was a gentleman of the privy chamber and captain of the yeoman of the guard and, by 1581, the date of *The Stage of Popish Toys*, was vice-chamberlain of the royal household. Hatton was knighted in 1581, and in 1587 he became lord chancellor. In his dedication to *The Philosopher*, North assumes a conventionally humble pose, referring to his own "bashful rudeness," "humble desire," and "ignorance," which "shall eclipse the worthiness of the work." He also anticipates that "some curious man" might question a soldier's ability to be a writer, and he defends his position: "the pen and pike do differ, Mars and Minerva are contrary, Bellona is nothing pleased with books: yet Poets have oft painted Pallas that academical Goddess to be armed with spear and shield." His identity as a soldier/writer is secured in the dedication to *Popish Toys*, where he styles himself a "martial professor." *Popish Toys* also signals North's religious leanings; not only has he chosen to translate a title dismissive of the Pope's "toys"; so also does his dedication speak of the Pope's tyranny.

Aside from the information in these dedications, what little is known about George North is presented in Marshall W. S. Swan's introduction to his 1946 facsimile edition of *Description of Sweden*. In it, Swan not only summarizes the marriage negotiations; he also discusses North's relationship to Eric XIV's sister, Princess Cecilia Vasa; mentions the fact that in 1569 North joined the camp of the Prince of Orange at Rochelle; and avers that North may have been the George North who matriculated at Trinity College in 1547.⁶

With the relevant years of the *Calendar of State Papers* his source,⁷ Swan elaborates on the Princess Cecilia relationship, which began with North's service

⁶ *Description of Sweden*, ed. Swan, xv, xvii, xv.

⁷ The entries are from February 1563 to April 1566. *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth, 1563*, ed. Joseph Stevenson (1869; Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1966), 6:93; *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth, 1564–5*, ed. Joseph Stevenson (1870; Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1966), 7:10, 249, 427, and 428; *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reigns of Edward VI., Mary, Elizabeth, 1547–1580*, ed. Robert Lemon (1856; Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1967), 1:270 and 271; *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth, 1566–8*, ed. Allan James Crosby (1871; Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1966), 8:56 and 63; and *Calendar of State*

with John, Count of Tenczin (Tenizyński), whose brother formerly courted the Princess. In January 1564, the Count wrote to Queen Elizabeth informing her of his brother's death and stating that he was determined to send George North, her servant, and Leo Curio, North's servant, to Sweden to console Cecilia. Apparently, the relationship between North and the Princess involved more than the delivery of this news. Cecilia married the Margrave of Baden and in 1565 left Sweden for England in order to fulfill her desire to serve England's Queen. North's role was fiduciary, and it did not go well. When Cecilia left England in spring 1566, North was attempting to manage her debts, with little success. The Princess complained of North to the Queen, and, when she arrived in Antwerp, she reported that "at the instigation of that most wicked man, George North, the goods of her servants have been made to pay the customs."⁸

Swan's mention of North's service to the Prince of Orange, while historically true,⁹ raises a philosophical problem. In "Discourse," North often references events in the Low Countries, where, in 1567, Philip II sent the dreaded Duke of Alva and 10,000 soldiers to suppress the Dutch Revolt. Alva's Council of Troubles, which had only recently come to an end, was responsible for the deaths of thousands of Protestants. At the time of George North's service, William the Silent was Prince of Orange and governor of Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, and Friesland. A believer in religious freedom, he was, at various times, Lutheran, Catholic, and Calvinist. Notably, in 1569, he was the primary leader of the revolt against Habsburg Spain, which gave rise to the Eighty Years' War. North apparently joined the Prince's camp at La Rochelle at the same time that William was commissioning "Sea-Beggars"¹⁰ to conduct raids against Spanish ships. Clearly, William the Silent, who called his project "armed resistance," was a fully armed rebel in charge of a violent rebellion. Did George North not realize this when he served under him? And did he

Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth, Addenda, 1566–1579, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (1871; Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1967), 7:8.

⁸ *Description of Sweden*, ed. Swan, xvii.

⁹ *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth, 1569–71*, ed. Allan James Crosby (1874; Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1966), 9:42.

¹⁰ Sea-Beggars, or privateers, were commissioned by heads of governments to attack and raid foreign ships. Their thefts were considered legitimate, unlike those of pirates or buccaneers.

not recognize the contradiction between his alignment with the Prince's cause and the philosophical position of his treatise?

As its title suggests, North's essay focuses on the history of rebellion and includes a variety of examples to stress the point that all revolts against monarchs, even tyrannical ones, are also against God and so doomed to fail. North extracted his historical anecdotes and political commentary from a wide range of sources from the pre-classical to the Elizabethan, all likely made available to him at Kirtling Hall. This includes the Bible, numerous works of Cicero, an unknown and likely unpublished English translation of Apuleius's *Apologia*, William Baldwin's *Mirror for Magistrates* (1575), Thomas Fortescue's translation of Pedro Mexia's *The Foreste or Collection of Histories* (1571), an unknown manuscript on Merlin's prophecies, and more.

North would amend these discussions as he saw fit and intersperse them with his own commentary, always emphasizing the same point: all rebellions are wrong, and all rebels will be punished. It is "ambitious desire" that "kindles sedition, treachery, treason, and uproar rebellion" (fol. 8). The supporting evidence that North amasses is as chronologically far-reaching as his sources: from Adam's first disobedience to the treacheries that plagued Ancient Greece and Rome to the Low Countries' revolt against Spanish oppression in his own time. Speaking of the Scriptures, North insists: "It is not to be read ... that any traitor or notable seditious person has at any time escaped without notable and famous punishment. God will not suffer his Magistrates to be disobeyed, his commonwealths to be disturbed, his laws to be condemned, and his godly and honest orders to be broken" (fol. 10). Showing no regard for the right of a people to overthrow a corrupt government – a right invoked in the Dutch Revolt and later in the English Civil War – or, for that matter, for England's Magna Carta (1215), which gives certain barons the right to overrule the King through force – or the more contemporary Papal Bull *Regnans in Excelsis* (1570), which excommunicates Elizabeth, "the pretended queen of England and the servant of crime" – North insists that even unjust, tyrannical leaders must be obeyed: "For whatsoever he be that is a King (be it by title of inheritance, succession, bequest, common consent, or election) is undoubtedly chosen of God to be his deputy, and whosoever resists any such withstands God himself, and are rank traitors and rebels" (fols 19–19v). While North denounces even

the attacks of nobility against tyrants, he saves his greatest disdain for citizen rebellions, which, in his view, were always fought under some false pretense, especially to regain supposedly lost liberties or ancient privileges (e.g., fol. 31). Not surprisingly, citizen revolts and/or treason against tyrants are also the main political concerns of the plays most closely linked with North's essay: 2, 3 *Henry VI*, *Richard III*, *Coriolanus*, *King Lear*, *King John*, and *Macbeth*.

Swan, of course, did not know of "Discourse," which includes the most revealing of North's dedications. In it, North establishes a relationship with Roger, 2nd Lord North and expresses his admiration for the work of Roger's brother, Thomas, who was to publish his translation of *Plutarch's Lives* in 1579–80 (having already published *The Dial of Princes* [1557] and *The Moral Philosophy of Doni* [1570]): "Most writers in English (both for invention and translation) do excel in this age (among whom Master T.N., your L[ordship's] brother, for copy, eloquency, and good method, may claim palm and place with the best..." (fol. 1v). George's eight-page dedication to his 13,000-word essay on rebellion and rebels ends with this plea to his host: "Most humbly craving of your L[ordship] to accept this rude and unpolished penning in lieu of a worthier work, since the same proceeds from the bare and barren breast of him whose glad desire would gratify you with greater gifts if scarceness of skill mastered not my best meaning" (fol. 1v).

Interestingly, Roger North's household accounts indicate that both George and Thomas were living at Kirtling Hall when George presented his manuscript to Roger and that George had been in residence there for at least four months, from early January to late April.¹¹ His receipt of £5 on Easter weekend, 21–22 April, the largest gift offered by Lord North that weekend, may have been a reward for the manuscript.¹² We can also secure the date of the essay by a comment on fol. 52 of the manuscript in which the author refers to Queen Elizabeth's government "by 17 years' continuance." This sets the writing between November 1575 and November 1576, a stretch that includes the author's residence at Kirtling.

¹¹ Lord North kept account books for the late 1570s and 1580s and records gifts to George North in the week before 9 January and on Easter Weekend, 21–22 April. See Roger North's Household Accounts, 1576–1589, British Library, Stowe MS 774, pt. 1, fols 5v, 15.

¹² Roger North's Household Accounts, fol. 15.

GEORGE NORTH AND THE KIRTLING HALL MANUSCRIPT

George North's "Discourse" first came to our attention in the 1927 Myers & Co.'s *Illustrated Catalogue of Fine and Rare Books*. On page 61, the Catalogue described the document as

THE ORIGINAL AUTOGRAPH MANUSCRIPT,¹³ neatly written on paper about 1576, 64 leaves, including 7 blanks, sm. 4^{to}, ruled in red throughout, in fine state, original limp vellum gilt, with holes for tie-strings, from the Wroxton Abbey Library, with the North bookplate.

It went on to state that "An autograph manuscript of an Elizabethan writer is an item of surpassing interest and rarity," then stressed, in small caps: "THE PRESENT MANUSCRIPT IS AN ORIGINAL AND UNKNOWN WORK." The Catalogue concluded with this tantalizing description, also in small caps, of two of the poems in the manuscript:

IT IS EXTREMELY INTERESTING TO COMPARE THIS EARLIER ELIZABETHAN, GEORGE NORTH'S POEMS ON OWEN GLENDOWER AND JACK CADE WITH SHAKESPEARE'S TREATMENT OF THE SAME SUBJECT IN RICHARD II. AND HENRY VI., PART II.¹⁴

Intrigued, we began our search for the document. After a year of disappointing results, we enlisted the aid of the distinguished manuscript

¹³ There are two George North signatures in the British Library, one in the library's copy of *Popish Toys* (General Reference Collection DRT Digital Store 699.c.49) and one in a letter (Cotton Vespasian C. VII, fol. 383). Based on these two signatures, it would appear that the signature in "Discourse" – and the whole of "Discourse" – is in George North's hand. In correspondence concerning the manuscript in 1933, Eric G. Millar, Deputy Director, Department of Manuscripts, British Museum, stated, "As far as it is possible to judge from a comparison," the manuscript "would appear to be holograph. The signature ... closely resembles that of our letter, and the rest ... seems to be written by the writer of that signature." He ended his assessment by saying he was "personally inclined to stump for it as being all right," adding that a colleague "thinks the same."

¹⁴ Myers & Co., *An Illustrated Catalogue of Fine and Rare Books* (London: Myers & Co., 1927), item no. 205. (Although Glendower is mentioned in *Richard II*, the writer of this advertisement is likely thinking of the sequel, *1 Henry IV*, in which Glendower has a more significant role.)

scholar Anthony Edwards; within weeks, he provided us with welcome news: the manuscript had been acquired in 1933 by the British Library and could be found today under the shelfmark Portland Papers Vol. DXX (29/327), Add. MS 70520. Needless to say, we were puzzled over its placement within the library's voluminous archive of Portland Papers. And when we accessed the folder, we found we were not alone. In a letter dated 12 April 1933, R. Weiss of Rhodes House Library, Oxford, asked two related questions concerning the manuscript: "How did it come from Wroxton to the Duke of Portland's Library?" "Was it bought at the sale of the Earl of Guilford's library that took place about 1825?"

In the eighteenth century, Kirtling Hall fell into disrepair, and it was pulled down in 1801. In 1762, Francis North of Wroxton Abbey, Oxfordshire, 5th Earl of Guilford and 7th Lord North re-established the family estate at Wroxton. The barony and/or the Kirtling estate passed to a succession of sons, widows, and brothers before settling on W. F. J. North, 12th Lord North, who died in 1938; in 1941, the estate was sold. Meanwhile, upon the death of the Earl of Guilford in 1827, a series of seven sales lasting until 1835 dissolved the Wroxton library. It is unclear whether the Portland family acquired the manuscript during one of those sales or whether, possibly, William John Arthur Charles James Cavendish-Bentinck, 6th Duke of Portland purchased the manuscript from Myers in 1927, selling it before the Catalogue re-advertised it in 1933 and the British Library bought it.¹⁵ The Myers Catalogue identifies the manuscript with Wroxton Abbey but makes no mention of the Duke of Portland. But the British Library folder contains a bookplate of "William Arthur, Sixth Duke of Portland, K.G.," along with one of the "Earl of Guilford, Wroxton Abby" – which explains how this North family document came to be archived among the Portland Papers. Grateful to have found the manuscript – and to have understood its shelfmark – we set to work on North's poems about Jack Cade and Owen Glendower.

¹⁵ A handwritten note in a copy of the 1933 Catalogue indicates that, although the item did not sell for the 1927 asking price of £180, it did go for 40 guineas.

2

UNCOVERING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN NORTH'S "DISCOURSE" AND SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

The process by which researchers identify sources is intuitively obvious. When scholars find that an earlier text contains a number of distinctive elements that also reappear in a later text, and they have encountered those elements nowhere else, they assume they have found the more recent author's inspiration. Frequently, this does not even require the presence of a shared peculiar word or phrase. Consider Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* as a source for *As You Like It*, Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* for *The Merchant of Venice*, and Greene's *Pandosto* for *The Winter's Tale*. These works have similar plot points and characters, but they share few if any unique collocations and phrases. At times, the same idea or image appearing in both Shakespeare and another text establishes a source. Sidney's *Defence of Poesy*, for example, is generally considered a source for a comment on stage conventions in *Henry V*, yet the only connection is that they are making the same point:

While in the meantime two armies
fly in, represented with four swords
and bucklers, and then what hard
heart will not receive it for a pitched
field? (*Poesy* 148)¹⁶

Where – oh, for pity! – we shall
much disgrace
With four or five most vile and
ragged foils,
Right ill-disposed in brawl ridiculous,
The name of Agincourt. ... (*Henry V*
4.0.49–52)

¹⁶ Sir Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy*, in *Sir Philip Sidney: Selected Prose and Poetry*, ed. Robert Kimbrough (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1969), 102–59; 148.

The reason many parallels do not involve shared language is that the dramatist typically did not copy verbatim but put the borrowed storylines or ideas into his own idiom. When an odd word or phrase from the earlier text does reappear in a play in the same context, the verbal match is often stressed as establishing with certainty that Shakespeare had indeed used that text. For example, Kenneth Muir observes that the casket story in *The Merchant of Venice* was popular in sixteenth-century Western Europe, but one particular rendition – Richard Robinson's translation of *Gesta Romanorum* (1577) – uses the rare word *insculpt*, which also occurs in Shakespeare's play in a similar circumstance. As Muir explains, "As the word *insculpt* is used in the latter with regard to the posy on the leaden vessel, and by Morocco in the first of the casket-scenes – and used nowhere else by Shakespeare – it is fairly certain that this is the version he used."¹⁷ Here, the identification of a source is based on the coincidence of a single rare term used in an analogous situation.

Whatever the discoveries of scholars pursuing source studies, for decades they have known that the range of their comparisons is limited. To determine whether a later text was linguistically indebted to an earlier text, scholars would collate passages, note their common features, peruse those texts for other parallel phrases, then use their knowledge of related literature to decide whether the shared elements were sufficiently distinctive. If they concluded that the seemingly related texts shared unique information or wording, then they would identify the earlier work as ancestral. But the fact remained that when common elements were noticed in two literary works, there was no definitive way to confirm rarity. Before digitization, scholars simply could not conduct searches in a comprehensive and objective fashion.

Now, however, the scholarly community has new and powerful tools, in the form of plagiarism software and digital databases, which enable the researcher to expose shared collocations and phrases that may have otherwise escaped notice – and then test whether these links are common, rare, or unique. Our choice of plagiarism software for this project has been WCopyfind, distributed by Lou Bloomfield of the University of Virginia; our searchable database was the Early English Books Online–TCP Partnership database (EEBO), Phase II,

¹⁷ Kenneth Muir, *The Sources of Shakespeare's Plays* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 89.

containing over 60,000 fully searchable early modern English texts, whether prose, poetry, or plays.¹⁸ Such research tools can quickly establish which texts share which elements and reveal whether these elements were common or unique. The Literature Online database (LION), though also helpful for searches of poetry, plays, and prose fiction, contains no non-fiction prose and so is not as comprehensive as EEBO for sixteenth- and seventeenth-century texts, especially if one is hunting for other possible Shakespeare sources.

To search EEBO for word strings, one may enclose the phrases within quotation marks. Collocations and word groupings can be found with EEBO's Boolean operators "NEAR" and "FBY," which allow a search for a particular word or phrase "near" or "followed by" another word or phrase. The default is to search within 10 words, but numbers may be used to vary the size of the grouping. Asterisks are "truncation operators" that retrieve all terms that begin with certain letters (e.g., a search for *loath** returns *loath*, *loathe*, *loathed*, *loathsome*, etc.). A question mark is a wildcard that stands for any letter (e.g., a search for *pa?t* yields *pat*, *pant*, *past*, *part*, etc.).

Over the last decade and more, many scholars have used EEBO or LION to aid in attribution studies. Although this is a source study, the rationale is similar. In source studies, the contention is that the author had recently read the earlier text or had it open in front of him, which explains the similarities between certain passages. In attribution studies, the claim is that the same author *wrote* the earlier passage and unconsciously echoes its language in a similar situation. In both cases, the scholar uses literary database search engines to test whether the parallels are commonplace. If LION or EEBO confirms that the relevant passages share rare or unique phrases or collocations, especially

¹⁸ The EEBO database lists the number of "items with keyed full text" at 60,237 records. According to the TCP webpage, <http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/eebotcp>, "the EEBO-TCP corpus covers the period from 1473 to 1700 and is estimated to comprise more than two million pages and nearly a billion words. It represents a history of the printed word in England from the birth of the printing press to the reign of William and Mary." When we first checked the prevalence of various phrases and word groupings in EEBO, we used Phase I, containing 25,000 searchable texts. In February 2017, we updated these searches to EEBO Phase II, which seeks to expand the size of this corpus by 45,000 or more texts. The size of the searchable texts continues to increase over time as Phase II nears completion.

in the same unusual context, this rules out other possible avenues for the similarities and establishes an exclusive link between the texts.

For example, in *Determining the Shakespeare Canon*, MacDonald P. Jackson argues that certain scenes of *Arden of Faversham* contain so many seemingly canonical elements that Shakespeare should be acknowledged a co-author:

Venus and Adonis ... contains at least two passages with multiple links to Arden's speech. It is natural that the hunting context common to the poem and Arden's dream should generate some similarities in the language used, but the series of items listed in Table 2.2. are shared by no other passage of comparable length in any play, poem, or prose work in the whole LION database.

In a footnote, Jackson describes his method:

This can be confirmed by ... setting the proximity function 'NEAR' at a range that covers the 95 lines of *Venus and Adonis* 554–648 or, for the second set of links, the 32 lines of 868–99, and keying in a string of some of the actual shared words (whatever their inflexion), thus: 'lion NEAR.200 thorn* NEAR.200 joint NEAR.200 trembled NEAR.200 bush', or 'for?ag* NEAR.800 impression NEAR.800 bent NEAR.800 thorn*' for 554–648 ...¹⁹

Jackson changes the proximity parameters, from 200 words to 800 words, depending on the size of the section that encompasses the relevant words. As he emphasizes, no other work in LION places all these words together in passages that size, and the fact that Jackson finds multiple unique word groupings relating these sections of text strengthens his point. While none of the shared terms is obscure, the fact that these are all brought together in a passage smaller than 1,000 words in a similar context implies a literary link between the two works, a point no one disputes. The only explanation, as Jackson points out, is that one author has influenced the other – or they are the same author. In this case, Jackson persuasively argues, relying on myriad lines of evidence, that the latter is true, a view that is quickly becoming mainstream.

¹⁹ MacDonald P. Jackson, *Determining the Shakespeare Canon: Arden of Faversham and A Lover's Complaint* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 56.

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In 2016, *The New Oxford Shakespeare* included the domestic tragedy in its collection of Shakespeare plays.

In this study, of course, the question of attribution does not apply as we only seek to confirm influence, a much lower bar; but the methodology used to eliminate the possibility of happenstance by distinguishing the commonplace from the unique remains the same. Even those who do quarrel with using verbal parallels in attribution studies do not deny that a series of peculiar correspondences in parallel passages indicates a literary connection between texts. The significance of such shared elements is the prevailing presumption that undergirds all source studies.

Consider the following indisputable example of a source passage from *Plutarch's Lives* and its offspring in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

<i>Plutarch's Lives</i>	<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>
He went into a chamber & unarmed himself, and being naked said thus... "I am sorry, that having been so great a Captain and Emperor, I am indeed condemned to be judged of less courage and noble mind than a woman ." (1006)	Unarm , Eros. The long day's task is done, And we must sleep. ... I, that with my sword Quartered the world, and o'er green Neptune's back With ships made cities, condemn myself to lack The courage of a woman – less noble mind (4.14.35–36, 57–60)

This is a peculiarly obvious source passage, one that comes from the most closely followed chapter in the best-known and most influential of all Shakespearean source texts. The example flaunts similarity of meaning, context, and language. Although the passages do not contain the same lines or phrases, they do share seven content words: *unarm(ed)*, *condemn(ed)*, *courage*, *less*, *woman*, *noble mind*. Both comments make the same point, and the context is identical: Antony is removing his armor and is addressing the recently deceased Cleopatra. The fact that the passages are linked is self-evident,

and, in all other instances, this type of comparative analysis, involving seven content words, would be more than sufficient for source scholars. Indeed, this is a remarkable example, and relatively few other source passages contain as many blatant similarities. Still, the following analysis, double-checked with the EEBO database, should help quell any possible doubts.

While it is true that all of these shared terms are well known, it is important to stress that even familiar words like these appear only sporadically in texts. For example, as common as the word *condemn(ed)* may seem, various forms of the word occur only 65 times in the 884,400 words of the Shakespeare canon (as determined by Open-Source Shakespeare). This equates to fewer than once in 13,000 words. *Unarm(ed)* is even rarer, occurring only 15 times in the canon – or fewer than once in 58,000 words. The two-word string *noble mind* is rarer still, appearing 5 times in the canon (1/176,880 words). The other three content words are rare too: *woman* (1/2,938 words), *less* (1/4,171 words), *courage* (1/12,800 words). In contrast, the relevant passages in *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Plutarch's Lives* are relatively small: merely 231 and 65 words, respectively. What is the likelihood that two particular passages of this size would match up on any seven content words of comparable infrequency? For a quick feel of the chances, consider major lotteries like Powerball and Keno in which a player can win hundreds of thousands or even hundreds of millions of dollars. In such lotteries, one must pick a series of numbers, typically between 1 and 69 or 1 and 80. In contrast, matching *condemn(ed)* would be like randomly picking the right number between 1 and 13,000; repeating *unarm(ed)* would be like hitting the right number between 1 and 58,000 – and then doing it again for *noble mind*, matching another randomly chosen number between 1 and 176,880, etc. Even with passages of dozens or even hundreds of words, which afford more opportunities for repeating a word, the likelihood of such correspondences happening by chance is still much less than winning a national lottery – as is the case with many of the examples studied in this book.

We can also use EEBO to make the same point. Even when we analyze just four of the terms and, for the sake of conservativeness, expand the search to 500 words – *unarm* NEAR.500 *condemn* NEAR.500 *noble mind* – the result is only these two passages. Indeed, such a search on EEBO also encompasses passages

up to 1,000 words long if, for example, *unarm* came 500 words after *condemn*, which in turn came 500 words after *noble mind*. Establishing uniqueness among a grouping of just four of the seven shared terms emphasizes the peculiarity of the similarity.

Here we have shown why even four content terms within 500 words, within the same context, may be probative, but verbal echoes in briefer passages are even more persuasive. Consider as an example the tight juxtaposition of the final content terms in the passage from *Antony and Cleopatra*, especially the last few lines of each passage. In this case, we need not expand the parameters and may search for *courage* NEAR *woman* NEAR *noble mind*. Again, this yields only *Plutarch's Lives* and *Antony and Cleopatra*.

This also helps expose the power of EEBO as a scholastic tool in source hunting. If you were looking for a possible source for *Antony and Cleopatra* and especially one for the passage above, a proximity search of the content terms for lines 4.14.56–57 would quickly scan more than 60,000 texts and more than one billion words²⁰ and direct you to the precise book, page, and lines that the dramatist was reading just before he wrote it. Moreover, the passages also share the same specific meaning and context, both of which are also distinctive features that confirm that the parallels could not have happened by chance.

Still, if we wanted to be peculiarly meticulous, we might imagine one last, alternative explanation. It is conceivable that Shakespeare did not have *Plutarch's Lives* open in front of him but had some other unknown work that also included a close replication of this passage. In other words, while the EEBO analysis may establish a genetic link between the two speeches, perhaps the dramatist encountered the relevant speech in some other source. But once we find other parallel passages linking *Antony and Cleopatra* to that same chapter and still other speeches from the Roman tragedies corresponding to other sections of *Plutarch's Lives*, then we know that this particular translation was indeed the seminal inspiration for many of the passages in Shakespeare's Roman plays.

This rigorous approach to source study preserves time-honored principles while providing a sure and efficient way to establish conclusions in a manner

²⁰ See TCP webpage, <http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/eebotcp> and citation above.

not possible prior to the invention of plagiarism software and search engines. Nearly all of the parallel passages we have identified here share peculiar and intricate elements involving both meaning and context – as well as verbal parallels that are unique to North and Shakespeare, with the massive EEBO database delivering no other examples of similarly worded passages by any other writer.

Two Examples: *Richard III* and *Henry V*

As an illustration, consider the first influential passage of "Discourse", which appears in the dedication to Lord North, before the essay begins. Specifically, in the opening paragraph, North counsels that those who study their shapes in the mirror and see themselves deformed should not surrender to villainy but strive to be inwardly beautiful in order to belie Nature. Readers familiar with *Richard III* will immediately notice the similarity to the Duke of Gloucester's opening monologue in which the hunchback considers his own deformed shape in the mirror and notes the connection between the inward and the outward. The difference, of course, is that Gloucester does not react as North advises: instead, he will play the villain and so match his outward form. The passages in "Discourse" and *Richard III* are substantively and verbally similar: they express the same elaborate series of ideas in the same order, and each includes a tight juxtaposition of the same eight terms: *glass, proportion, fair, feature, deformed, world, shadow, Nature* (and *dissembling/deceived*) (see table opposite). Moreover, the future Richard III echoes the terms in "Discourse," in nearly the same order:

"Discourse": *proportion, glass, feature, fair – she (Nature), deformed, world, shadow, Nature-deceived*

Richard III: *glass, fair, proportion, feature – dissembling-Nature, deformed, world, shadow*

Both passages start with the *glass-proportion-feature-fair* grouping, referring to someone who, gauging himself in the mirror, sees that he is hideous in

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North's "Discourse"	Shakespeare's <i>Richard III</i>
<p>... to view our own proportion in a glass, whose form and feature, if we find fair and worthy, to frame our affections accordingly, if otherwise <u>she have (by skill or will)</u> deformed our outward <u>appearance and left us odible to the eye of the world</u>, then (to cure, shadow, or salve the same) so to govern and guide our behavior, and so to moderate our inward man, as Nature herself may seem <u>to be deceived</u> in us. Whereunto no cunning can easier attain than by making our own minds true mirrors of all our actions. (Dedication 0v-1)</p>	<p>But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks, Nor made to court an amorous looking glass... I, that am curtailed of this fair proportion, Cheated of feature <u>by dissembling Nature</u>, Deformed, unfinished, sent before <u>my time</u> <u>Into this breathing world</u> scarce half made up... Have no delight to pass away the time, Unless to see my shadow in the sun And descant on mine own deformity. And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover ... I am determinèd to prove a villain ... (1.1.14-16, 18-21, 25-28, 30)</p>

the eyes of others. Then both conclude with the *Nature-deformed-world-shadow* grouping, as each blames *Nature* (also referred to as "she" in "Discourse") as the perpetrator. It is *Nature* that sent them into the *world deformed*. Both are comparing appearance to behavior – particularly linking outward deformities to the potential for inward villainy – though, of course, North concludes by counselling against it while Shakespeare's tyrannical King ends by using his deformity to justify ill deeds. Both works also evoke the concept of *Nature* as either *dissembling* or being *deceived*.